the measures until October 21, 1999 relating to the programmes of three US institutions namely the EXIM Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Trade Development Authority (TDA). The US Administration also restored lending by US Banks and resumed their International Military Education and Training Programme (IMET). Further, on February 18, 1999, a World Bank loan for Andhra Pradesh Power Restructuring was approved with some G-8 countries voting for the proposal and others abstaining.

(d) Developing and strengthening of closer economic ties is an ongoing process, and holds a very important place in India's foreign policy objectives. The Government will continue to monitor and evaluate our economic ties with all countries, and to explore opportunities for promoting our trade and investment interests.

PM's statement regarding 'Lost Ground'

2537. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact as per P.M.'s statement published in press on 1st March, 1999, India treats POK, Siachin and 5000 sqr. Kms. ceded by Pakistan to China as "lost ground";

(b) if so, whether Government treat actual line of Control as Internal Border; and

(c) if so, whether this change means a change between Pokharan-Lahore visit of Prime Minister?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government are committed to upholding the Constitution of India. The unity and territorial integrity of India shall not be compromised. The Line of Control is not the international border. There is no change in Government's position regarding Pakistan's forcible and illegal occupation of a part of the territory of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Support of G-8 for suspension of World Bank aid to India

2538. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether G-8 its recent meet supported the suspension of the World Bank aid to the country, suspended since the nuclear test till India expresses its willingness to sign the CTBT;

(b) if so, what are the implications involved; and

(c) what is the reaction of Govemment with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) In June 1998, the G-8 countries indicated that they would not oppose the World Bank aid to India meant to meet basic human needs. Loans aggregating USS 1.245 billion to support seven such projects have been approved by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank since our nuclear tests. Recently two projects not classified as basic human needs have been approved by the World Bank Group. Some of the G-8 countries voted for the proposal while others abstained or opposed. Government is in touch with G-8 countries at various levels and the situation is being closely watched. The Government of India is taking all possible steps to obtain funding support to projects posed by us to different institutions.

Relations with Japan

2539. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHAND-RA REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state the efforts made to normalize relations with Japan owing to common security concerns?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): There is an ongoing dialogue, at various levels. This process commenced with my meeting with the then Foreign Minister of Japan (now Prime Minister) in Manila in July 1998. Both sides then agreed on the need for resumption of bilateral talks and continuance of private sector and people-to-people contacts. Subsequently, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, met his Japanese counterpart, during a transit halt in Tokyo (October 26); Shri I.K. Gujral, Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs met the Japanese Prime Minister, Foreign Minister

(October 29) and the Finance Minister (October 27) in Tokyo; Industry Minister Shri Sikander Bakht met the Japanese Minister for Trade and Industry in Tokyo (November 2). Meetings at the official level include: Foreign Secretary level talks in January 1999; Trade Talks (at Commerce Secretary level) in February 1999; and MEA-MITI dialogue (at Secretary level) also in February 1999.

A Japanese Parliamentary delegation led by Deputy Speaker Watanbe (November 1998) and the President of Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League and former Foreign Minister Dr. Taro Nakoyama (10 March 1999) have visited India. Two economic delegations, one led by the Chairman of the Japan India Business Cooperation Committee and the other led by the Chairman, Japan India Cultural and Economic Exchange Committee, visited India in November-December 1998 and February 1999 respectively.

These exchanges have contributed to better mutual understanding.

Idea of independent Kashmir by Kashmir study group

2540. SHRI V.N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to newsitem published in Asian Age on 25th February, 1999 that the Kashmir Study Group, a think tank in U.S.A. has floated the idea of independent Kashmir; and

(b) what is the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Group called the Kashmir Study Group has denied that it has issued any report containing any suggestion of an independent Kashmir. A preliminary paper, reportedly proposed by some members of the group floats such an idea.

Government's views are well known. Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India.

नेपाल में भारतीय फिल्मों का बहिष्कार

2541. **श्री जनेश्वर मिश्र** : क्या विदेश मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि "नेशनल मास मूवमेंट" को - आर्डिनेशन कमेटी" ने भारतीय फिल्मों के बहिष्कार का फैसला किया है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार ने इस संबंध में नेपाल सरकार से बात की है;

(ग) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(घ) यदि नही, तो इसके क्या कारण है?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती वसुन्धरा राजे) : (क) से (घ) सीमित समर्थकों को एक गैर-सरकारी संगठन नेपाल के राष्ट्रीय लोक आन्दोलन समन्वय समिति, ने 15 मार्च, 1999 से चार महीने की अवधि के लिए हिन्दी फिल्मों का बहिष्कार करने की मांग की है । नेपाल की शाही सरकार ने इस बहिष्कार से अपने-आपको न तो सहयोजित किया है और न ही नेपाल में हिन्दी फिल्मों के प्रदर्शन पर प्रतिबन्ध लगाने के लिए कदम उठाने की घोषणा की है। इस बात को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस मामले को नेपाल सरकार के साथ उठाना आवश्यक नही समझा गया है ।

Bombing at Iraq's military sites by US and UK

2542. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported bombing of Iraqi military sites in first week of February, 1999, by US and UK war planes; and

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has consistantly opposed armed action against Iraq as it is counter productive and only aggravates the sufferings of the Iraqi people. The Government of India calls for a diplomatic resolution of all problems relating to Iraq under the auspices of the United Nations.